Table of Contents

1. Allegiances (PART ONE)
2. Prologue
3. Chapter One
4. Chapter Two
5. Chapter Three
6. Chapter Four
7. Chapter Five
8. Chapter Six
9. Chapter Seven
10. Chapter Eight
11. Chapter Nine
12. Chapter Ten
13. Chapter Eleven
14. Chapter Twelve
15. Chapter Thirteen
16. Chapter Fourteen
17. Chapter Fifteen
18. Chapter Sixteen
19. Chapter Seventeen

Allegiances (PART ONE)

StormClan

Leader: Redstar- a ginger tom with reddish-orange spots and green eyes

Deputy: Thistleberry- a large light brown tabby tom with blue eyes

Medicine cat: Smokespot- a black she-cat with dark grey spots and yellow eyes

Apprentice: Hawkpaw

Warriors:

Bluestream- a blue she-cat with silver stripes and blue eyes

Patchfall- a grey and orange she-cat with amber eyes

Runningstomp- a light brown tabby tom with black stripes and amber eyes

Robinnose- a black tuxedo tom with an orange belly and green/ yellow eyes

Apprentice: Flamepaw

Bramblestripe- a dark brown tabby tom with a white underbelly and paws and blue eyes (one eye blind)

Skycloud- a rare-looking brown calico tom with black and white patches and green eyes

Splashback- a light brown tom with darker brown splotches and

blue eyes

Apprentice: Shadowpaw

Ravenflight- a black she-cat with small silver patches on her paws and purple-blue eyes

Apprentice: Turtlepaw

Spottedback- a dark brown she-cat with white patches and pale green eyes

Whitewind- a white tom with patches of black and green eyes

Blazeflurry- a large black tom with orange flecks and green eyes

Apprentice: Nightpaw

Greyfrost- a light grey tabby tom with yellow-green eyes

Hailcoat- a white tom with grey paws and blue eyes

Adderflight- a dark brown tom with black stripes and amber eyes

Apprentice: Greypaw

Ashflower- a grey she-cat with dark grey patches and blue eyes

Cloudstorm- a white tom with light grey patches and light blue eyes

Thundercloud- a grey tom with white paws and sharp amber eyes

Apprentices:

Shadowpaw- a white she-cat with black paws and one blue eye and one green eye

Flamepaw- a ginger tom with grey patches and blue eyes

Turtlepaw- a brown tortoiseshell she-cat with amber eyes

Graypaw- a light grey tom with white markings and blue eyes

Nightpaw- a black tom with orange splotches and green eyes

Hawkpaw- a brown tabby tom with blue eyes

Queens:

Squirrelthorn- a grey tabby she-cat with blue eyes (not expecting kits)

Gingerfire- a ginger she-cat with amber eyes (Littlekit, Cherrykit and Emberkit)

Elders:

Cindershine- a dark grey she-cat with white spots and yellow eyes

Thistlestride- a light brown tom with white patches and blue eyes

Sandstalk- a light ginger tabby she-cat with yellow-green eyes

Mistyclaw- a light grey tabby she-cat with green eyes

DarkClan

Leader: Sharpstar- a white she-cat with large black patches, spiky fur and blue eyes

Deputy: Blacksong- a black tom with a white chin and amber eyes

Medicine Cat: Rosewind- a ginger she-cat with blue eyes

Apprentice: Springpaw- a small silver tom with yellow eyes

StreamClan

Leader: Halfstar- a small black tom with a large white patch on the side of his face and amber eyes

Deputy: Greyfleck- a grey tabby tom with amber eyes

Medicine Cat: Frostfang- a white tom with dark grey spots and blue-grey eyes

BreezeClan

Leader: Blazestar- a thin dark grey she-cat with small assorted orange flecks and blue-green eyes

Deputy: Flamespeck- a ginger tabby tom with large curved stripes and amber eyes

Medicine Cat: Maplefire- a dark grey she-cat with orange and white patches and blue eyes

Other Cats

Bones- a white tom with light brown stripes and blue eyes (loner)

Scotty- a white tom with black patches and amber eyes (loner, previously kittypet)

Pebble- a black she-cat with orange, white, brown, and grey spots and green eyes (kittypet)

Milo- a ginger tabby tom with green eyes (kittypet)

Ocean- a black she-cat with silver stripes and yellow eyes (rogue, previously of StormClan)

Spark- a calico she-cat with green eyes (loner)

Morgan- an extremely old brown tabby she-cat with a large yellow belly, a white chin and green eyes (kittypet)

Prologue

"Try and kill me!" a yowl echoed over the deathly quiet of night. Two cats circled each other in a clearing. Other cats were sitting on the side, watching cautiously and curiously. A few kits scrambled out of a den, only to be ushered back in quickly. The two cats in the clearing hissed at each other.

"You'll never take me down, Oceanflower!" one shouted.

"Neither will you, Moonleaf!" Oceanflower yowled. She let out a hiss and sprung at Moonleaf. The pale grey she-cat was taken by surprise as Oceanflower bit into her back. Moonleaf yowled in pain and flung her off. As Oceanflower flew through the air, Moonleaf aimed blows at the silvery-black she-cat's belly. Oceanflower hissed and her claws flew at Moonleaf's ears. She snagged one with her claw and tore out a chunk. Moonleaf growled and flew at Oceanflower's face, landing blows on her muzzle. Then, with a sudden boost of strength, Oceanflower jumped and grabbed Moonleaf by the throat, delivering a sharp bite.

Moonleaf fell to the ground. She wasn't moving. The other cats in the clearing stared at her motionless body, horrified. Oceanflower looked terrified.

"What happened?!" a voice cried out from on top of a hill. A spotted ginger tom bounded down from the rocky slope, concerned. He glimpsed Moonleaf's dead body. He looked horrified, then angry. He turned to Oceanflower, who had blood dripping down her muzzle.

"What did you do to Moonleaf?!" he asked angrily, stepping towards her. Oceanflower still looked petrified.

"I-I didn't mean to..." she stammered. "W-we were fighting, a-and-"

"Why were you fighting?!" the tom shouted, scaring a couple kits inside of the nursery. He looked terrified and absolutely mad.

Oceanflower shrank down to the ground. She stared at the dirt, her expression betraying her emotions. She didn't look the tom in the eye.

"Redstar?" asked a young brown tom. The ginger tom snapped around. "What, Skypaw?"

Skypaw shrank down a little. "They were fighting over... over how the kits should... should be raised... and... and everything went wrong..."

Redstar turned his head to look back at Oceanflower. She still wasn't looking at him. "Is this true?" he asked, moving his head closer to the she-cat.

"Y-yes," she whispered, barely audible. Redstar stepped away from Oceanflower. He looked over at Moonleaf's still body. He sighed.

"We will pay vigil to Moonleaf and hope she has an everlasting new life in Starclan," he said, looking at all the other cats. "I want Thistleberry, Adderflight and Cindershine to meet with me in my den to discuss what we will do with Oceanflower."

Oceanflower scrambled to her paws. "Please don't send me away, Redstar!" she meowed, still in a panicked daze. "I still have my kits! Who will look after them?"

Redstar glanced at her. He narrowed his eyes. "Squirrelthorn can look after them," he finally meowed. He looked over at the grey and white she-cat. "Ashkit and Cloudkit are going to be apprenticed soon and then there will be more room in the den. She will be a good caretaker." he said. Squirrelthorn nodded.

With that, Redstar turned and headed into his den.

Suddenly, a flurry of kits burst out into the clearing. Some cats tried to shoo them back into their den, but a few got out from in between their paws.

"Where's Moonleaf? She said she would be back soon!" a black and orange kit cried, not seeing his mother's dead body lying behind a few cats. "She promised!"

A black she-cat with dark grey spots padded up to the kit. "I'm sorry, Nightkit." she said sadly.

Nightkit cocked his head to one side. "Why are you sorry? You don't have to be! Where's Moonleaf?" He strained to see around her.

The she-cat sighed. She moved so that Nightkit could see. "She's dead, Nightkit. I'm sorry."

The small black-and-orange tom froze, rooted to the ground. His eyes showed that his feelings were spinning through his head like a windstorm. Two other kits,who looked like they could be related to Nightkit, bounded out beside him only to stop and let out a wail of anguish. All three kits slowly stepped forward until they were sitting beside their mother.

An orange and grey kit poked her with his paw. "Moonleaf?" he said, quietly. "Moonleaf, please get up! Please! Don't leave us! Stay with us! We have fresh-kill and nice dry moss!" The small kit was panicking. His brothers were sitting beside their mother, their noses pressed into her fur. The orange and grey kit laid down next to her and did the same.

"Redstar, no, we can't banish her!" yowled a light brown tom from inside Redstar's den. "She's my mate! I can't bear to never see her again!"

"I'm sorry, Thistleberry, but we can't have a murderer in our Clan!" Redstar meowed. "We'll heal her wounds and then she has to go! What would the other Clans think of us?"

Thistleberry didn't say anything, but just sighed and looked at the ground of the leader's den. Redstar turned his head to a brown tabby tom. "Adderflight, do you agree with me?" he asked.

Adderflight nodded. "We don't want a murderer in the Clan. I say we send her out towards the Twolegplace and make sure she stays off of our borders." he meowed in agreement.

Redstar nodded. "I agree with Adderflight," he said to the other two cats in his den. A grey tabby she-cat nodded in agreement with her

leader. "Oceanflower was one of my best friends," she said, staring sadly out the entrance to Redstar's den. "But we can't have a murderer in our camp!" she said sharply, turning her head back to the other three cats. "Who knows what will happen next? She might go crazy and kill someone else!"

"That is true, Cindershine," Redstar said. "So it has been decided. We will let Oceanflower's wounds heal and then we will send her out to Twolegplace." The other three cats nodded, Thistleberry looking at the ground still. Redstar turned and stepped outside his den.

"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey join under the Highstone for a Clan meeting!"

Chapter One

"Try and keep up, Shadowpaw!"

Shadowpaw raced through the trees after her Clanmates, picking up speed. She threw a taunt back at her sister.

"Not like you can do any better, Turtlepaw!" she meowed as she sped past her sister and raced up next to Flamepaw. He was kind of cute and very nice. Shadowpaw kind of liked him. Suddenly, he skidded to a halt. Shadowpaw got confused and suddenly tripped over a root. She slid across the forest floor and skidded to a halt as Greypaw walked up in front of her, Nightpaw right behind him. Turtlepaw wasn't far behind Shadowpaw. She slammed to a stop but looked confused.

Greypaw sighed. "Since all of you look confused, I'll go over this assessment thing again. We're supposed to all be assessed today so we can become warriors, in case you forgot." he explained. Shadowpaw looked at her sister and saw the confusion fade away from Turtlepaw's face.

Greypaw continued. "We're all supposed to catch at least two pieces of prey to pass the assessment. If you don't catch anything, then bad luck, cause you're stuck as an apprentice." Nightpaw was staring off into the woods as if he had already located a mouse or something, his ears perked up.

"Well then, I guess we better all get going," Flamepaw said, snapping Nightpaw out of his trance. The five young cats set off into the woods in separate directions.

Shadowpaw figured she would try near Twolegplace. There might be a squirrel or two there. She set off into the woods, bounding over tree stumps and ivy tendrils. As she neared the Twolegplace, she caught a scent of magpie near the border. She crept closer, seeing the bird fighting with a worm. She pounced... and got a pawful of feathers. The bird flew away.

"Mouse dung!" she said under her breath. The magpie let out a warning cry, then flew up into the highest branches of the Great Oak. No way she was climbing that. Shadowpaw opened her jaws to scent for prey. She scented a squirrel close by. She crept through the trees and spotted a tuft of grey fur. She sat back on her haunches and crept forward a little. She wasn't looking where she was going, though, and stepped on a leaf. The squirrel perked up, alert, then scuttled up a tree trunk and sat on a branch high above Shadowpaw's reach. It chattered at her and scuttled farther up. Shadowpaw huffed. She opened her jaws again.

The scent of vole hit her nose. Shadowpaw bounded in the direction of the prey. Spotting the vole, she stopped and positioned herself into her hunter's crouch. The vole was rustling through the ferns, making quite a bit of noise. Shadowpaw gathered her haunches, jumped and crashed straight into Nightpaw. The orange-and-black tom had pounced at the same time as her. Shadowpaw had been so focused on the vole that she hadn't scented him. The vole, clearly panicked, scuttled away into the grasses. Shadowpaw rubbed her muzzle with one paw. Nightpaw looked a little dizzy.

"Hey, are you okay?" she asked, prodding him with one paw.

"Yeah, just a little dizzy," he answered, flicking his ears. "I guess we both jumped at the same time and didn't know it."

"Yeah," Shadowfoot meowed. She opened her jaws again to see if she could find the vole again, but it was gone. "I'm gonna go look for more prey," she told Nightpaw. "I haven't caught anything yet." she admitted, a little embarrassed.

Nightpaw smiled. "Don't worry, I haven't caught anything either," he said. "Unless you count leaves." His ear flicked towards something in the woods. "I hear something in there somewhere," he said, getting up. "I'm gonna go try and catch it."

And with that, he bounded off.

Shadowpaw stood up. *Which way did the vole go again?* she wondered. *Oh, that's right, this way*. She bounded off into the ferns. She could hear the vole scuttling through the grasses, looking for

something to eat. She shifted into her hunter's crouch again, scenting the air for any of her other Clanmates, just in case she accidentally crashed into anyone again. She didn't scent anyone. The vole scuttled a little farther.

One, two, three, JUMP! Shadowpaw pounced onto the vole and quickly bit its neck, hearing a squeak as the vole fell limp in her jaws. She dug a hole and was scraping earth over her prey when she heard a loud wail of pain.

Hey, wait a second... that sounds like a cat!

Chapter Two

Shadowpaw raced through the trees to the sound of pain coming from somewhere in the woods. Maybe it was one of her Clanmates! She tried to run faster, pumping her legs, swerving to avoid ivy tendrils and tree roots. She rounded a tree stump to see Adderflight, Ravenflight and Patchfall circling a fox. The fox was a cub, but it had blood dripping from one of its paws. It snarled at the three cats and ran off. Patchfall ran after it, revealing Flamepaw sprawled on the ground, a red circle where his left eye was, blood gushing from the wound. Turtlepaw, Nightpaw and Greypaw were sitting next to him, looking terrified. Shadowpaw ran up next to them.

"What happened?!" she asked, worried about Flamepaw.

"A fox came up a-and... scratched out h-his eye..." Turtlepaw said, staring at him, horrified. "P-Patchfall chased it off..." She stopped.

Shadowpaw looked at Flamepaw. He was unconscious. His face had three large claw marks scored through it, going straight through his eye. They were also flowing with blood, making them difficult to see.

"We need to get Flamepaw back to camp!" Adderflight yelled, snapping all four apprentices out of their trance. Nightpaw and Greypaw nodded and took a place on both his sides. Adderflight and Ravenflight stepped behind them, holding up his back legs. Flamepaw seemed to be conscious enough to absentmindedly take a few steps every now and then.

They made it back to camp, Shadowpaw and Turtlepaw trailing behind. Once they were in the clearing, Flamepaw collapsed. Smokespot and Hawkpaw, Shadowpaw's brother, rushed out to see him. Hawkpaw chewed up a pulp and put it on the wound as Smokespot forced a poppy seed down Flamepaw's throat. Patchfall was sitting nearby with a couple scratches. She padded up beside Flamepaw.

"I ran back to camp as soon as I could after I chased that fox off," she said. "You only got back just a few heartbeats after me." Her pelt was ruffled, as if she had run to the Starpool and back.

Shadowpaw's clanmate Ashflower bounded up, confused. She clearly couldn't see Flamepaw.

She walked up next to Shadowpaw. "What's going on here?" she asked, sitting down next to Shadowpaw. All she could do was gaze sadly at Flamepaw. Ashflower caught on quickly and also turned her head to look. *As nice as she is, she is a little mouse-brained*, Shadowpaw thought to herself as Ashflower's eyes widened. The grey she-cat stiffened as she tried to stutter out a couple words.

Smokespot interrupted her. "He'll be fine, but his eye won't," she said, stepping away from him. Flamepaw had leaves wrapped around half of his face. "All I can really do for him now is make sure he rests and stop the bleeding. Greyfrost, Bluestream, can you help me carry him into the medicine den?" She beckoned to the two warriors. Greyfrost and Bluestream nodded and propped him up between them. They carried him off to a rock with a giant crack down the middle. Smokespot and Hawkpaw followed them closely.

Shadowpaw and Ashflower trailed behind a little. They sat outside the medicine den, silent for a few minutes. Shadowpaw looked up at Ashflower's face. It showed no expression but her eyes betrayed her emotions spinning wildly in her mind. Shadowpaw knew Ashflower had a crush on Flamepaw. Almost everyone in the Clan knew except for Flamepaw himself.

Shadowpaw shifted around a little. "So, how do you think he's gonna look after his eye heals?" she asked Ashflower, trying to break the silence that loomed over them.

Ashflower turned and looked at her. She smiled, but only slightly. "Well, I imagine the same, but with no eye." The smile faded from her face and she gazed back into the medicine den.

"Hey, Ashflower! Hey, Shadowpaw! What's going on here?" a voice said from behind them. Shadowpaw jumped. She turned around. *Great, it's Cloudstorm*, she thought. Cloudstorm was Ashflower's

brother and the most annoying cat in the Clan. He walked up a little closer. Shadowpaw could tell he had no idea what happened to Flamepaw, as he was acting quite cheerful. He looked at both of them, happy then confused. He tilted his head to one side. "Why is every cat in the Clan acting so gloomy? We just came back from a hunting patrol and we caught a massive rabbit!"

I guess mouse-brainedness sort of runs in the family, she thought to herself. She shifted her paws.

"Me, Turtlepaw, Greypaw, Nightpaw and Flamepaw were having our last assessment," she started, looking into the medicine den again. "Flamepaw ran into a fox..."

"...and it scratched his eye out." Ashflower finished for her. She stared at her paws. Cloudstorm looked at both of them, surprised.

"Are you sure this actually-" he started.

Shadowpaw interrupted him. "Yes, it *did* actually happen, Cloudstorm, and I was there. Patchfall chased the fox off and came back to the camp just a few heartbeats before we did."

Cloudstorm seemed more surprised than sad, as he just kind of absentmindedly wandered away to the fresh-kill pile. Shadowpaw turned to Ashflower.

"So now all we have to do is wait," she said.

Chapter Three

[Author's Note: The story will sometimes switch to Flamepaw's point of view, and it happens often so the plot will either make sense or it will create a new perspective on things]

Flamepaw woke up inside of Smokespot's den. His face felt like half of it was on fire and all he could see on one side was darkness. He raised his head up, but Smokespot, who was sitting in the corner of the den, rushed over and gently pushed it back down. Flamepaw grunted.

"Why can't I sit up?" he asked, as the right half of his face burned again. Smokespot sighed.

"Your face was scratched viciously by that fox you ran into," she said, sorting some leaves while she was talking. "It will take a little less than a moon to fully heal. You've been unconscious for a few days, and this is the first time you've fully woken up."

"What?!" Flamepaw said, sitting up then wincing at the pain. He laid his head back down. "Will I become a warrior or am I gonna have to stay an apprentice forever?" He huffed. "It isn't fair."

Smokespot looked at him a little sharply. "Well, how did you even run into that fox in the first place?" She sat there, looking expectant. Flamepaw sighed.

"I was tracking a rabbit. It was burrowing a bit close to the abandoned fox den at the edge of the border. The fox scent hit my nose, and I thought it was stale. Guess my nose isn't as great as I thought it was," he said, rubbing his nose with his paw. "I jumped on the rabbit and killed it, but then as I was dragging it closer to camp, the fox came from behind me. I ran a little, but it caught up to me quickly. I didn't even have time to climb up a tree, so I turned around and tried to land a blow on its muzzle, but then its front

paw came and swiped across my face, and I fell asleep. I woke up in here." He shifted around in his nest a little. His eye stung like crazy.

Smokespot moved some leaves back into their places.

"Now rest. It'll feel a bit better in the morning." She wasn't looking at him. A gust of wind came into the den, moving a few neatly stacked piles of leaves. Smokespot huffed.

"Not again!" she said, annoyed. "I need to talk to Redstar about fixing the draft problem in this den." She turned around and picked up some herbs, moving them around. She picked up a poppy seed and gave it to Flamepaw.

"Here, eat this," she said, putting out her paw. "It'll dull the pain and help you sleep better."

Flamepaw licked up the seed, then closed his eyes and slowly faded away into a blissful sleep.

* * *

"Come on, Skycloud, they're getting their warrior names!"

A shout woke Flamepaw. He sat up in his nest, his face feeling like more of a dull ache than a true pain. He looked at Smokespot. He heard Whitewind and Skycloud outside.

"I wonder what Shadowpaw's is gonna be!" he heard Skycloud say. Flamepaw grunted. *Back off, Skycloud, because Shadowpaw is not your mate*, he thought. He turned to Smokespot.

"They're getting their warrior names?" Flamepaw asked, a bit confused.

"While you were unconscious, they retook their assessment and passed," Smokespot replied as she sorted leaves. Flamepaw paused and thought for a second.

"Can I go watch my littermates get their warrior names?" he asked, hoping she would say yes.

Smokespot got up and walked towards him. She moved the leaf around his right eye a little.

"If the pain isn't too bad, then yes, you can," she said. "But come back to my den instantly if you feel any sharp pain."

"I will, don't worry!" He sat up, his muscles aching to be stretched. He padded out of the den, sitting by the entrance. Greypaw and Nightpaw were sitting under the Highstone next to Turtlepaw and Shadowpaw. They were all gazing excitedly up at Redstar. Nightpaw and Greypaw noticed Flamepaw and excitedly grinned at him. Nightpaw made a motion with his paw that looked like he was trying to say Flamepaw should be up there with them.

I would be, if it weren't for that mouse-brained fox, he thought, shifting his paws and grinning back at his brothers. Hawkpaw shuffled up next to him.

"How's your eye doing?" the younger tom asked. He looked as excited as the other apprentices, and Flamepaw remembered that Hawkpaw was Shadowpaw and Turtlepaw's brother. He had reason to be excited.

"It's doing good enough," Flamepaw replied.

"Let all cats old enough to catch their own prey join under the Highstone for a Clan meeting!" he heard the familiar cry ring out. Redstar was standing on the Highstone, Thistleberry next to him. When most of the Clan had streamed out into the clearing, Redstar called out to the other apprentices.

"It is a rare occasion that we have four apprentices becoming warriors at the same time," he said. "Shadowpaw, step forward."

Shadowpaw looked nervous. She stepped forward and raised her chin a little to look at Redstar.

"Do you promise to respect and uphold the warrior code and the Clan, even at the cost of your life?"

Shadowpaw nodded. "I do."

"Then by the power of Starclan I grant you your warrior name. Shadowpaw, from now on you shall be known as Shadowfoot. Stormclan honors your speed and your wits, and I hope you will be a valuable warrior of this Clan." Redstar gazed into Shadowfoot's eyes. She sat up straighter and lifted her chin. She padded over to sit next to Skycloud, who was sitting on the side. Flamepaw snorted.

"Turtlepaw, step forward."

The brown tortoiseshell she-cat stepped forward until she was below Redstar. She gazed up at him from the clearing.

"Do you promise to respect and uphold the warrior code and the Clan, even at the cost of your life?"

Turtlepaw nodded excitedly. "I do."

"Then by the power of Starclan I grant you your warrior name. Turtlepaw, from now on you shall be known as Turtlepelt. Stormclan honors your energy and your strength, and I hope you will be a valuable warrior of this Clan." Redstar smiled warmly at Turtlepelt, who raised her chin up high and looked proud of herself. She padded over to sit next to Shadowfoot.

"Greypaw, step forward."

Greypaw confidently padded forward and sat down in front of Redstar. He looked up at him expectantly.

"Do you promise to respect and uphold the warrior code and the Clan, even at the cost of your life?"

Greypaw smiled confidently and nodded. "I do."

"Then by the power of Starclan I grant you your warrior name. Greypaw, from now on you shall be known as Greyshade. Stormclan honors your intelligence and your quick thinking, and I hope you will be a valuable warrior of this Clan."

Greyshade stood up and padded over to where Shadowfoot and Turtlepelt were sitting.

"Nightpaw, step forward."

Nightpaw seemed to have been in a trance and jumped a little when Redstar said his name. He skittered under the Highstone and looked up at Redstar.

"Do you promise to respect and uphold the warrior code and the Clan, even at the cost of your life?"

Nightpaw shook a little. "I do."

"Then by the power of Starclan I grant you your warrior name. Nightpaw, from now on you shall be known as Nightstorm. Stormclan honors your stealth and your speed, and I hope you will be a valuable warrior of this Clan."

Nightstorm nodded and padded swiftly over to his friends. Flamepaw almost expected Redstar to call his name, but the leader just turned around and went back into his den.

"Shadowfoot! Turtlepelt! Greyshade! Nightstorm!" the Clan shouted. Flamepaw joined in.

I should be up there with them, he thought. *I* am *the oldest out of all of us*. The cats in the clearing began breaking up. Greyshade and Nightstorm walked up to Flamepaw.

"I really wish you had gotten your warrior name with us up there," Greyshade said, scraping a line in the dirt with his claw. "I wonder what it would have been."

"Flameclaw?" Nightstorm suggested. "It has a nice ring to it."

"I like the name Flamesmoke," Greyshade said. "Or maybe Flamecloud."

Flamepaw huffed. "Not Flamecloud," he said, glancing over at Shadowfoot, Turtlepelt, Whitewind and Skycloud. They all seemed to be having a good time.

Without me.

Flamepaw turned back to his brothers.

"I guess we'll find out soon."

Chapter Four

"Higher!"

Flamepaw jumped and reached his paw higher up into the air, reaching for a leaf dangling high above his head. He dropped down, the leaf stuck in his claw. He huffed.

"Why do I have to jump that high? It doesn't help with my eye either, so what kind of move is this?" he asked.

Bramblestripe, his mentor, grunted. "If a piece of prey or an enemy is stuck high up, you need to be able to grab it," he said, walking around his apprentice. "Plus, it pays to know how to jump high in case you have to jump quickly onto something." Bramblestripe sat down. His one blind eye stared blankly at Flamepaw.

That really creeps me out, Flamepaw thought to himself, shifting his paws. He stood up.

"Can we go back to camp?" he asked. "I kind of want to go hunting."

Bramblestripe sighed. "We might as well, the way this session is going," he huffed. The older cat stood up and bounded into the woods towards the camp. Flamepaw ran after him.

He ran through the woods. A bird twittered in a tree without leaves. Squirrels chattered to each other. Mice scuttled through the dead snowy grass. Tiny fish flapped in a small icy stream nearby.

The forest is actually really beautiful if you stop and look at it, he thought to himself. *Even if it is leaf-bare*.

It had been a moon since Flamepaw had run into that fox. His eye had healed fully and his new mentor was Bramblestripe, since the older tabby tom had gone blind in his left eye.

The two toms pushed through the bushes into the camp. Emberpaw, Cherrypaw and Littlepaw were play-fighting over a large squirrel.

Flamepaw purred. He walked over to the smaller apprentices and picked up the squirrel, its tail dangling low enough for the apprentices to reach.

"Hey!" Emberpaw sat up. "That was our squirrel!" His half-brother batted at the squirrel's tail with his claws. Cherrypaw and Littlepaw joined him. They all hooked their claws onto the tail and pulled it out of Flamepaw's mouth. The three small apprentices let out a yowl of triumph as the squirrel fell on the ground. Their mentors, Ravenflight, Runningstomp and Patchfall walked out into the clearing from in the warrior's den. Ravenflight swished her tail.

"Do you three want to go hunting?" she asked, sitting down next to Emberpaw, Cherrypaw and Littlepaw, who had nearly finished the squirrel.

Cherrypaw popped her head up. "Yes!" she squeaked. "Can Flamepaw come with us?" She bounced up and down, her fur spiking up in excitement.

Patchfall purred. "If he wants to," she said, glancing at Flamepaw. He was three full seasons younger than her but he already stood at her height. Flamepaw nodded. "Sure, I'd love to," he said, gazing down at the apprentices. Emberpaw and Cherrypaw bounced up and down, excited, but Littlepaw just stared at the ground.

I think something's got Littlepaw down, Flamepaw thought. He padded over to the much smaller apprentice and picked him up by his scruff.

"Hey!" Littlepaw squeaked, swinging in the older tom's jaws. He batted at Flamepaw with his tiny paws, but soon gave up any effort. He hung limply in Flamepaw's jaws.

Uh oh, Flamepaw thought. *That might not be good*. He set down the tiny tom but then he instantly was pummeled by tiny paws. Littlepaw had regained his energy and was clawing at Flamepaw's muzzle. Flamepaw sat up, purring.

"Looks like someone's excited to go hunting," he said, padding over to Ravenflight. She nodded at him and bounded out of the camp.

The apprentices bounded after her with Patchfall and Runningstomp behind them. Flamepaw followed right behind them.

* * *

Flamepaw crouched down, a rabbit sniffing the ground in front of him. It was scuttling around, looking for food. He wiggled his haunches and pounced. A small shriek was cut short by his killing bite. Flamepaw shook the rabbit a little, a bit of blood splattering on the ground in front of him. He scratched a hole in the earth and buried the rabbit. A bush rustled and a squirrel shot out. Taken by surprise, Flamepaw grabbed at the squirrel but it slipped from in between his claws.

A loud bark resonated from inside the forest. A screech rang out. Flamepaw sat up sharply. He ran towards the noise. The barks grew louder as he ran faster. He pelted through the forest, small branches whipping at his fur and muzzle. One hit him directly in the face, but he kept running. He skidded to a halt near the Great Oak just as Emberpaw shot out in front of him. The smaller tom was running as fast as his little paws could carry him. Cherrypaw was right on his tail, speeding out of a bush next to Flamepaw.

A very loud bark shook Flamepaw back to his senses, as a humongous dog broke through the brambles and veered straight for Flamepaw. He quickly turned and jumped high up into a tree, his claws digging into the bark as he climbed higher up.

Thank Starclan I had that lesson with Bramblestripe earlier, he thought to himself as the dog shook the tree, growling and barking. Suddenly, a small whimper came from a different bush. Both Flamepaw and the dog heard it. Flamepaw instantly knew who it was.

Littlepaw.

Chapter Five

Flamepaw jumped to the tree next to his. He had to get to Littlepaw before that dog did! The tinier apprentice would instantly be torn to pieces by the huge brute.

The dog was circling the bush, waiting for another sound to clarify that the weaker cat was there. It kept circling, but each time it went around it got closer. Eventually, it would pounce.

Flamepaw crept farther up his branch. He positioned himself on the branch, ready to jump. As the dog circled around again, even closer to the bush this time and growling loudly, Flamepaw pounced right onto the dog's back. He scratched at its side and back, yowling loudly. The dog barked, surprised, and tried to throw him off, but Flamepaw gripped his claws tighter into the dog's pelt and bit down onto its neck. The dog yelped and bucked around, loosening Flamepaw's grip. He let go of the dog with his teeth.

"Littlepaw, run!" he yowled at the bush, clawing at the dog's side. "Get as much help as you can!" He sank his teeth back into the dog's back as it bucked around again. The tinier grey-and-white tom poked his head slightly out of the bush, but seeing that Flamepaw was keeping the dog occupied, bolted away towards the camp. The bracken stopped rustling soon after the apprentice pelted away.

Flamepaw jumped off of the dog and instantly ran for his tree again. He rushed up it, the dog right on his heels. It snapped at his tail, taking the end bit off. It fell back down onto the ground with a tuft of orange fur in its huge jaws. It circled the tree, snarling, as Flamepaw tried to catch his breath. Suddenly, the dog started clawing and biting at the thin tree trunk.

It's trying to knock down the tree! Flamepaw realized. He had to jump to a different tree soon, or he would fall a long way down. He looked around. The only branches nearby were too thin to support his weight, except for one branch. It looked sturdy enough to hold him for a few moments. He glanced back down at the dog as the

tree shuddered, almost falling down. The dog had gotten halfway through the trunk already. It was snarling loudly, scaring away all the prey within earshot. Flamepaw looked back up at the branch. He fixed his position, gathered his haunches, and jumped, just as the dog got through his tree's trunk and the whole thing fell to the forest floor.

At that moment, a whole patrol burst through the trees, led by Hailcoat. Thistleberry and Adderflight rushed to the dog's sides and swiped at its haunches. Blazeflurry jumped on its back and bit down while Hailcoat swiped at the dog's muzzle, jumping back to avoid its claws. Shadowfoot dashed in between the dog's legs, clawing its soft underbelly. The five cats bit and scratched at the dog, until it eventually turned tail and fled, bleeding from several different wounds.

Flamepaw jumped down from his tree, panting. His side had a large scratch on it and his ear was torn. He licked away at his wounds but was quickly interrupted by Ravenflight, Runningstomp and Patchfall bursting through the trees with the three apprentices on their tails, as well as Hawkpaw carrying herbs. Hawkpaw quickly ran over to Flamepaw and applied a poultice to his wounds and attached cobwebs to his pelt to make sure it stayed in place.

As Hawkpaw fixed up Flamepaw's wounds, Patchfall walked up close to him.

"You saved my apprentice!" she said gratefully, looking at him with a joy she could not put in words. Littlepaw bounded up next to her. "I can't believe you took on that huge dog by yourself to keep him from harm!" She rubbed against him as a sign of thanks, and he returned it, careful to not dislodge his medical treatment.

Hawkpaw finished checking on everyone. "Okay, Flamepaw's injuries are the worst, but if we can all make it back to camp without any more disasters, that would be great." He turned around and started walking back to camp, his unused herbs clutched tightly in his jaws.

Flamepaw glanced sideways at Ravenflight, who was slightly smiling. He turned back to Hawkpaw and walked with him and the

others back to camp.

Chapter Six

"All cats old enough to catch their own prey join under the Highstone for a Clan meeting!" the familiar cry rang out.

Flamepaw sat proudly next to the Highstone, his good eye beaming. Shadowfoot saw him and padded over. She sat close to him and smiled. As she gazed at Flamepaw, she caught a vision of Turtlepelt in the corner of her eye motioning something to her sister with her paws. Shadowfoot turned to look at Turtlepelt.

Her sister was moving her paws closer together, as if she was trying to tell Shadowfoot to move closer to Flamepaw. Shadowfoot almost heeded her sister's advice when she saw Ashflower glaring at Flamepaw with a ferocity that seemed like a warning. Shadowfoot glanced at Turtlepelt, shrugged, and looked up at Redstar, who had bounded out onto the Highstone.

The leader waited patiently for the murmuring to die down before speaking loudly. "Cats of StormClan, most of you know what Flamepaw has done today." He looked down at the group of cats and seemed satisfied when most of them nodded. Shadowfoot nodded vigorously and smiled warmly at Flamepaw.

"For the cats who don't know," Redstar continued, "Flamepaw has saved Littlepaw from a dog that got loose from its Twolegs. I will send patrols to check that the dog is gone later." He looked back down at Flamepaw. "But today, he is becoming a warrior. Flamepaw, step forward."

Flamepaw beamed with pride and padded forward until he was facing Redstar.

"Do you promise to respect and uphold the warrior code and the Clan, even at the cost of your life?" Redstar said solemnly.

"I do." Flamepaw said, looking up at Redstar with no fear in his eye.

"Then by the power of Starclan I grant you your warrior name. Flamepaw, from now on you shall be known as Flameheart. Stormclan honors your strength and your quick thinking, and I hope you will be a valuable warrior of this Clan."

Flameheart bowed his head to Redstar and padded over to Shadowfoot. She moved over a bit to make room for him and they sat together.

"Flameheart! Flameheart!" The Clan called out his new warrior name, with Greyshade and Nightstorm being the loudest. Shadowfoot could almost feel Flameheart's pride and joy bursting out of his chest.

After the shouting died down, the Clan dispersed back to their normal duties. Shadowfoot walked over to Turtlepelt and sat down next to her.

"Want to go hunting with me and Flameheart?" she asked. "You can bring another cat along if you want."

Turtlepelt nodded and bounded off to get Cloudstorm. He was eating a shrew, but as soon as Turtlepelt began talking to him, he pushed it to Bluestream, who gladly accepted it and began eating. Shadowfoot groaned in annoyance, but went to grab Flameheart and the four went out into the forest together again.

Chapter Seven

Shadowfoot bounded into camp beaming, her jaws full of prey. She had caught two scrawny mice and Cloudstorm had helped Turtlepelt catch a large thrush, which was better than nothing. The patrol's load of prey would help feed the Clan, which was great because leaf-bare was just beginning.

Shadowfoot looked up to the cold, cloudy sky as it began to snow lightly. She set her fresh-kill down onto the fresh-kill pile and bounced around the camp slightly, taking in the beautiful sights of the white flakes falling.

Flameheart padded up to her with Ashflower next to him. His empty eye socket had a tiny bit of snow stuck inside it, and he shook it out. Shadowfoot gazed at him in admiration. He had lost an eye, but he was still the funny, loving cat from a moon ago.

They talked for a bit before Hawkpaw walked up to Shadowfoot, clearly excited about something.

"What are you so excited about, Hawkpaw?" Shadowfoot asked, seeing his energy and becoming curious.

"Smokespot said she's gonna give me my medicine cat name at the Starpool tonight!" he said happily, bounding up and down on his paws. "I finally get to be a real medicine cat!"

"That's awesome, Hawkpaw!" Ashflower said. "You must be extremely excited."

Flameheart glanced quickly at Ashflower with a look on his face that said *well, if you can't tell, you're probably a little mouse-brained*, but he did it so rapidly that Ashflower didn't see it. Shadowfoot purred, a warm feeling in her chest growing larger. She glanced up at the rapidly setting sun.

"I think you should get ready to go to the half-moon meeting, since

it's almost nighttime," she said, motioning with her tail to the orange sky.

All the medicine cats went to the Starpool to share tongues with Starclan on the night of the half moon. The meeting had been created at the beginning of the Clans and was used as tradition ever since. All the medicine cats were required to attend unless they had a Clan problem.

Hawkpaw was quite literally bouncing up and down on his paws, clearly enthusiastic about the trip this time.

"Anyways, you're right," he said, regaining his composure. "I should definitely get ready to travel, since the Starpool is all the way in StreamClan and it's across the lake from us." He purred loudly and padded away to the medicine den, his tail swishing happily back and forth.

Flameheart looked at Ashflower and Shadowfoot, then yawned loudly.

"I think we should get some rest now, since we've been hunting almost all day," he said, his tail twitching back and forth. "I'm going to go find a nest in the warrior's den." He turned and walked into the den with Ashflower right on his tail.

Ashflower needs to give Flameheart some space, Shadowfoot thought, rolling her eyes. After a few seconds, she walked into the den and curled up in her nest.

Chapter Eight

[Author's Note: ok so I wrote this chapter really late at night (like 3am) and I couldn't think of anything to use to finish this chapter and I still can't now, so this chapter isn't finished. Just saying]

Flameheart woke up to see Hawkpaw looming over him, a look of concentration on his face. The slightly younger tom was tending to the wounds Flameheart gained yesterday. Flameheart sat up, a little surprised.

"Stop moving, Flameheart," Hawkpaw meowed, annoyance lacing his voice. "I already had enough trouble while you were asleep, because you were tossing and turning like crazy."

Flameheart looked around. He wasn't in the warrior's den anymore, but instead in the medicine den. He looked back at Hawkpaw.

"Hawkpaw-"

"Hawkflame." The tabby tom cut him off without even looking up. He was busy wrapping a poultice around Flameheart's ear and sealing it on with cobwebs, but his ear kept flicking around naturally and throwing off the cobwebs. "Flameheart, stop moving your ear."

"Sorry, but how did you even get me into the den?" Flameheart made sure his ear stayed still.

"Thistleberry and Smokespot helped me." Hawkflame finished Flameheart's ear and moved onto the large scratch on his side. "It was a surprise you didn't wake up."

Chapter Nine

[Author's Note: ok so this chapter is a bit confusing but Ocean is an *important* character, remember that]

Shadowfoot crept quietly through the dead grass, being careful to not make any noise by stepping on a twig or swishing her tail and moving a leaf. A squirrel nibbled at an acorn, its tail swishing left and right. Shadowfoot stopped, then moved forward slightly, getting into position to pounce.

The squirrel perked up its ears, listening to a bird rustling through the trees. Shadowfoot wiggled her haunches and leaped. She grabbed the squirrel by its back, swiftly killing it with a bite.

Suddenly, a bush nearby rustled loudly and a few twigs snapped to the left of Shadowfoot. She looked at the bush just as a yowl sounded out.

"That was my squirrel!"

A black shape jumped out of the bush at Shadowfoot. She dropped her squirrel in surprise as the shape landed on her. The black shape tore at her pelt with razor-sharp claws and Shadowfoot clawed back. The shape jumped off of her and paused in front of her, panting. Shadowfoot stood a few tail-lengths away from the shape, quickly looking it up and down. The shape was a black she-cat with long thin silver stripes and yellow eyes. She had quite a few scars, along with one prominent long pink mark going straight through her eye. It reminded Shadowfoot of Flameheart.

The black she-cat suddenly stopped, her eyes going wide. Her mouth opened slightly, then she closed it and her eyes narrowed. Shadowfoot looked at the cat, confused.

She looks like my mother, she thought. The cat straightened up and padded over to Shadowfoot slowly, her pupils turned to slits.

"Why are you catching prey in my territory?" the cat asked. Shadowfoot scrunched her muzzle up, a little offended. The cat sat down in front of her.

"Your territory?" Shadowfoot asked, miffed. "This is StormClan territory!" She looked the she-cat up and down. "But since you're a loner, I wouldn't expect you to know about the Clans."

"I was part of a Clan once," the she-cat said, sounding a little sad. Shadowfoot flattened her ears, even more confused than before. The she-cat didn't sound like she was joking. "But I did something that I still regret, and I lost too much because of it."

Now Shadowfoot was bewildered. Why was this random she-cat who had just tried to steal her prey now talking to her like a Clanmate?

"Uh... I don't know you," Shadowfoot said, raising an ear. "Why are you telling me all this?" The she-cat looked at her, then sighed.

"My bad," she said, scratching her ear. "My name is Ocean." She lowered her paw and walked a bit closer to Shadowfoot. "Sorry for not giving you a proper introduction."

"Ah." Shadowfoot sat down. "My name is Shadowfoot, and I'm a warrior of StormClan." She tilted her head and looked at Ocean curiously. "Which Clan were you from?" she asked.

Ocean flattened her ears and looked away. "I prefer not to talk about it," she replied. "I... killed another warrior and I was exiled." Shadowfoot now felt a bit of sympathy for Ocean, and she walked closer and wrapped her tail around the black she-cat's back. "I'm sorry to hear that," she told Ocean. "It must be hard living out here on your own."

Ocean smiled gratefully at Shadowfoot. "Thank you," she replied. Shadowfoot smiled, then turned around as she heard Turtlepelt calling her name. She looked back at Ocean.

"I'm sorry, but I have to go," she said, standing up. "My sister is calling for me. I would imagine that I have to go back to the Clan."

Ocean stood up as well.

"It was nice meeting you!" the black she-cat called as Shadowfoot bounded away towards her sister.

Chapter Ten

[Author's Note: I know there's been a few of these in the last couple of chapters but this is important. The Clans celebrate Christmas (its weird, don't ask why) and they have one day where the cats wake up and there's a pile of fresh prey in the middle of their camp and then they have a Gathering of some sort (in the daytime) and the cats of StarClan come down to dance on the lake and greet loved ones. Idk why I decided that this would be a feature of the story but it is.]

Shadowfoot walked into camp next to Turtlepelt with a mouse dangling from her jaws. She had accidentally left the squirrel with Ocean, but she didn't want to go all the way back to get it and had caught a mouse to make up for it. As she walked into the camp, she felt Turtlepelt nudge her side.

"I think Skycloud's got a thing for you," her sister whispered as they carried their prey to the fresh-kill pile. Shadowfoot looked over at Skycloud, who was talking with Whitewind and swatting at him, his face looking a little flushed. Whitewind was laughing his tail off while Skycloud kept glancing over at Shadowfoot. Turtlepelt snickered, then placed her shrew on the fresh-kill pile. Shadowfoot did the same with her mouse, then the two sisters went over to the medicine cat den to talk with Hawkflame.

"Hey, Hawkflame!" Turtlepelt said loudly, looking into the dark medicine cat den. Their brother's white muzzle popped out from the darkness. He smiled and walked closer.

"Did you know that tomorrow is the Christmas celebration?" he asked, nudging Shadowfoot. She smiled and nudged him back. "It is? I had lost track of the days." she replied, looking at Turtlepelt. "Are you planning to go with Cloudstorm this time?" she asked her sister tauntingly. Turtlepelt looked at her paws, blushing.

"Maybe..." she said, quickly glancing over at the white tom. He was

sitting with Emberpaw, Cherrypaw and Littlepaw, showing off something. Shadowfoot sighed.

"I don't see why you like him, Turtlepelt," she said, glancing at Hawkflame, who nodded in approval. "He's one of the most annoying cats in the Clan."

"But he's one of the sweetest," her sister replied, still gazing at him. "There's hope that he'll shape himself up." Shadowfoot and Hawkflame smiled at each other with the same look, then her brother sighed.

"There's hope, I'll give you that," he said, before walking back into the medicine cat den to sort herbs. Shadowfoot shook her head.

"I don't know what you see in him, but you can chase after him if you want," she told Turtlepelt. "cause I'm not stopping you." Turtlepelt smiled at her sister, then smirked as Flameheart walked up to them. She nudged Shadowfoot a little.

"Oh, stop it," the white she-cat whispered to her sister as Flameheart came closer. He didn't have Ashflower on his tail for once, which was nice. He smiled as he saw Shadowfoot sitting by the medicine cat den.

"Hey," he said, sitting by the entrance. "What brings you two to the medicine cat den?" Shadowfoot knew that he had to get more medical treatment for his large scratch from the fight with the dog.

"Oh, we were just talking with Hawkflame," Turtlepelt replied, seeing her sister was at a loss for words.

Flameheart smiled. "Well, I'm here for the medicine," he replied. "I think I should go inside or Hawkflame is gonna yell at me for being late." He walked into the den, leaving Shadowfoot and Turtlepelt outside.

Shadowfoot felt another nudge from her sister, but she didn't do anything this time. Anytime Flameheart went by, she had a warm feeling in her chest.

Chapter Eleven

Flameheart stretched his muscles and smiled as he walked into the snow-covered clearing. It was sun-high, so he knew he had slept through some of the morning. The Christmas celebration from the other day had been great. All four Clans had been there, and he saw his mother dancing on the icy lake. After gathering his two brothers, they had finally found the chance to talk to her.

Flameheart didn't bother to find his father Blazeflurry though, since he had moved on and become mates with Gingerfire almost a moon after Moonleaf died. Emberpaw, Cherrypaw and Littlepaw were now his half-siblings, and Flameheart hadn't trusted his father since.

Other than that, it was great seeing all the cats of StarClan dancing on the lake, and he had finally found a chance to have a full conversation with Shadowfoot without Ashflower butting in. *Sometimes Ashflower just needs to give me some space*, he thought as he waded through the snow to the Highstone, waiting for Thistleberry to put him on a patrol. The older light brown tom padded up the rock, looking around the Clan. The deputy looked down at Flameheart.

"Flameheart, you're going to be on a DarkClan border patrol led by Hailcoat, along with Turtlepelt and Splashback," he said. Flameheart nodded and noticed the patrol leaving for DarkClan, so he quickly ran over to join them before they set off.

* * * * *

It was getting dark by the time the patrol returned to the camp, all of them tired. As they walked into the camp, Flameheart saw Shadowfoot sitting with Ashflower, clearly a bit uncomfortable, but her expression changed to happiness when she saw her sister walk back into camp. Turtlepelt was also looking happy and she dashed over to meet her sister. Flameheart smiled and walked over to his

brothers, who were sharing a thrush. Nightstorm saw Flameheart walking over and moved over a little so he could eat some of the thrush.

Flameheart meowed a thanks and began eating. Greyshade and Nightstorm carried on a conversation, and Flameheart joined in occasionally. After the three brothers finished the thrush, Nightstorm and Greyshade went to the warriors den, but Flameheart stayed behind. He buried the bones of the thrush, but now he needed time to think.

He walked quietly through the woods until he reached the lakeshore, the place he liked to sit without being disturbed by anyone. It was sundown already, so the pink and orange sky was beautiful-looking against the lake. Flameheart sat there for a little while, before he heard a small shuffling noise and scented one of his Clanmates. He turned around to see who it was.

"Flameheart?" He heard Shadowfoot's voice as he turned and saw the beautiful white-and-black she-cat standing there. His eye widened and he shuffled his paws. "What are you doing down here?" she continued. Flameheart paused for a few heartbeats, trying to think of something to say.

"I like to come down here to think sometimes," he finally said. He knew it sounded bad, but it was the best he could come up with.

"Me too," Shadowfoot said, sitting closer to him. The two sat there on the beach together, glancing at each other occasionally then looking away. *I wonder if she knows that I like her*, he thought nervously. After a little while, he finally decided to tell her. He took a deep breath.

"Uh, Shadowfoot?" he asked timidly. She looked at him. "Yes?" she replied. He quickly took another deep breath so she wouldn't notice.

"I've been... uh... meaning to tell you something..." he stammered. Shadowfoot put her paw on his side.

"Anything you want to tell me, you can tell me," she said. "I won't judge you." Flameheart smiled slightly at her, then took one last

deep breath.

"I... think I like you," he said, somewhat rapidly. "In... more than just a... 'friend' way..." He looked at his paws nervously, thinking she might not share his feelings or she might not like him anymore. He was surprised when he heard her purr.

"Oh, Flameheart," she said happily. "I was about to tell you the same thing." He looked up at her and she was smiling. "You just beat me to it."

Flameheart felt his jaws curling into a grin. *Shadowfoot likes me too!* he thought happily. He nuzzled the side of her head and she returned it.

Flameheart purred and Shadowfoot pressed her body into his, her tail wrapped around him. They stayed like that for a while, gazing into the sun.

[Author's Note: (at the bottom now) okay so I know that this whole "romance" thing is a bit rushed but it needs to happen in order for the plot to move forwards quicker so don't judge]

Chapter Twelve

Shadowfoot woke up in her nest from a nudge on the side. She groggily sat up and opened her eyes to see Turtlepelt standing next to her. The brown tortoiseshell she-cat was looking really excited as she woke up her sister. Shadowfoot rose and rubbed a paw against her eyes as Turtlepelt ran to the den entrance and beckoned for her sister to follow her outside. She followed Turtlepelt, still half asleep. It was dawn and the sun was just rising. Shadowfoot yawned loudly.

"What did you bring me out here for?" she asked, still in a sleepy state. "I had a night watch last night and I was planning to sleep till sun-high." Turtlepelt seemed too happy to care, as she was bouncing up and down.

"Shadowfoot, the night watch doesn't matter right now," she said, still bouncing around. "I'm expecting kits!"

Shadowfoot was instantly alert. "You are?" she asked. "That's amazing!" She paused for a bit, curious. "Is Cloudstorm the father?" she asked her sister.

Turtlepelt nodded happily. "You're the first cat I've told," she said. "Cloudstorm isn't up yet. He's a heavy sleeper." She smiled. "He probably wouldn't wake up even if the camp was invaded by Twolegs."

Shadowfoot smiled. It had been a moon since she found Flameheart down by the lake and they told each other their secret. Shadowfoot looked at her sister's belly, which looked a little more round than any other cat's. "How long have you been expecting?" she asked.

"Smokespot said for at least half a moon," Turtlepelt replied. "I only felt the kits kicking yesterday." She put a paw on her belly, smiling. Shadowfoot heard a cat coming out of the warriors den and scented Cloudstorm behind her. She turned around to see the white-and-grey tom standing next to Turtlepelt, grinning happily. Shadowfoot

groaned internally, but watched the two mates as they talked to each other. I may not like him, but at least Turtlepelt is happy, she thought.

As Turtlepelt and Cloudstorm talked, the white tom jumped back in surprise, then ran back to his mate happily and rubbed his face against hers. I guess she told him about the kits, Shadowfoot thought, smiling. Now Turtlepelt will begin a family.

She saw Flameheart walking out of the warriors den, and she quickly ran over to him. He noticed her out of the corner of his good eye and stopped as she rapidly slid to a halt next to him.

"Guess what?" she asked the ginger tom. He looked at her a little confused, then shrugged. "I don't know, what?" he replied.

"Turtlepelt is expecting kits!" she said excitedly, but she remembered to keep her voice down so she wouldn't wake anyone else up. Flameheart's ears perked up and his expression changed from sleepy to happy. "Really?" he replied. "That's great!" He looked at Turtlepelt and Cloudstorm talking excitedly together in the clearing. "I would imagine that Cloudstorm is the father?"

"Of course!" she said, rolling her eyes. "Those two have been eyeballing each other for the past two moons!" Flameheart purred.

"Flameheart!" Thistleberry's voice sounded from the Highstone. He looked over at the light brown tabby tom. "Go with Spottedback, Whitewind and Ashflower on a hunting patrol by Twolegplace." Flameheart nodded at the deputy and bounded off in Whitewind's direction, leaving Shadowfoot with Turtlepelt and Cloudstorm. She smiled at Thistleberry and walked over to the Highstone.

"Shadowfoot," he said, smiling at his oldest daughter. "You will go with Splashback, Greyshade and Bramblestripe on a BreezeClan patrol." Shadowfoot nodded and, looking around, saw Greyshade and ran over to him. He was already ready for the patrol, and so were the two senior warriors, so the four set out to BreezeClan.

Chapter Thirteen

Flameheart crept through the undergrowth, his ear twitching. His good eye darted around the trees. His nose twitched, finding a mouse under a tree stump. He moved closer, being careful not to step on any leaves or twigs. He saw the mouse nibbling on a grass seed, completely involved in what it was doing. Flameheart wiggled his haunches slightly, his claws unsheathed and digging into the forest floor. He prepared to pounce but suddenly, a loud rustle came from a nearby bush. The mouse looked up and ran off. Flameheart sat up and huffed.

It was probably Ashflower in that bush, he thought. *She must have caught something in there*.

He stood up and walked towards the bush a little.

"Hey, Ashflower!" he called. "What did you catch?"

The bush rustled again and a white muzzle popped out. Flameheart backed up a bit.

Definitely not Ashflower.

He flattened his ears and sat down. "Who are you?" he asked. The cat- a calico she-cat with green eyes- walked fully out of the bush. She sat down in front of him, looking him over.

"Nevermind me, who are you?" she asked, still glancing at him. Her eyes rested on his blind eye. Her ears flattened. "And what in the world happened to your eye?"

Flameheart huffed. "My name is Flameheart," he said, annoyed. "And my eye was scratched out by a fox when I was an apprentice."

The she-cat tipped her head, confused. "Well, you can call me Spark, but... what's an apprentice?" She sat down, as if asking for an

explanation.

Flameheart tipped up his ears a bit. *So she isn't a Clan cat.* He shuffled his paws, trying to find a way to explain the warrior code to a loner.

"So, do you know what the warrior code is?" he asked Spark. She just looked at him confused.

"Okay, so you don't." He sighed. This was going to be hard.

As Flameheart began to explain the warrior code to Spark, Ashflower poked her head through a bush, holding a huge pigeon in her jaws. Flameheart turned his head to look at her, his eye widening as he saw the pigeon.

"Now this is who I was expecting to pop out of that bush," he said, turning back to Spark. "And that's quite an impressive pigeon you've caught there, Ashflower."

Ashflower eyed Spark suspiciously, dropping the pigeon from her jaws to speak.

"Flameheart, who's this?" she asked, her voice hinting a warning. Flameheart turned towards her and stood up, walking over to the pigeon.

"Ashflower, meet Spark. Spark, meet Ashflower." He bent down to pick up the pigeon. Despite Flameheart's strength, the pigeon was still very heavy. "Now, Ashflower," he continued, his words somewhat muffled by the pigeon's feathers, "we have to bring this back to camp, since Turtlepelt might be kitting sometime soon and Cloudstorm will want her to eat this." He turned his head to look at Spark. He gave her a warning glance.

"Don't follow us." With that, he turned around and dragged the pigeon towards camp with Ashflower right behind him.

Flameheart didn't get too far, though, because he smelled something. It wasn't the pigeon, but something else. He could hear it walking through the trees...

His eye widened. "Twolegs!" he yowled to Ashflower. She nodded, clearly scenting it too. Flameheart could hear Whitewind and Spottedback close by, and they were faintly yowling to each other. He saw Spark just standing there. She definitely hadn't scented the Twoleg yet. Flameheart ran over to the green-eyed she-cat.

"Why are you standing around?" he yowled at her. "Are you mouse-brained? There's a Twoleg nearby!" Spark looked at him, a little confused, then her eyes widened and she turned around just in time to see a Twoleg kit stomp through the forest.

Flameheart was about to turn around and run back to the rest of the patrol but he watched, wide-eyed, as Spark made a strange yowling noise at the Twoleg. The Twoleg kit paused, wide-eyed, and Spark ran closer to it.

"What in the name of StarClan are you doing?" Flameheart yowled at her. "Can you speak Twoleg?" His eye was still wide and Ashflower was still looking concerned.

Spark looked back at the two StormClan warriors, then ran even closer to the Twoleg.

"Flameheart!" He heard Ashflower's meow and looked behind him. "Forget about her, let's just get this prey back to camp!" The ginger tom nodded and, with a quick glance behind him, ran towards camp. He heard Whitewind and Spottedback close by and Ashflower gave them a warning to run back to camp.

[Author's Note: this chapter was definitely a bit confusing. Spark is also a pretty important character later on but the Twoleg thing is kind of a crossover bit from another story I wrote, so the Twoleg isn't important. But Spark is so don't forget about her]

Chapter Fourteen

Shadowfoot stretched in the clearing after sharing a small mouse with Skycloud. It had been about a moon since Turtlepelt first told her that she was expecting kits, and the brown tortoiseshell she-cat had moved to the nursery about half a moon ago. Cloudstorm would bring her fresh-kill or water quite often and at one point Shadowfoot heard the two mates have a small argument over how some of the prey should at least be saved to feed the Clan. Today, though, Turtlepelt kept meowing in pain, and she said that her kits were coming soon.

Shadowfoot sat outside the nursery. She heard Cloudstorm inside, consoling her sister.

"Don't worry, love, I'll catch you the biggest piece of prey I can," he said, before stepping out of the nursery. He saw Shadowfoot close by and walked over to her.

"Hey Shadowfoot," he said, his voice lined with a little stress. "You wanna go on a hunting patrol with me? I think Turtlepelt really needs some prey to boost her strength for when she starts kitting." Shadowfoot reluctantly nodded. "Can I grab another cat to go with us?" she asked him. The white tom nodded.

Shadowfoot looked around the clearing. She saw Flameheart and Ashflower standing together, but Flameheart clearly didn't want Ashflower there, so she bounded over to the two.

"Hey, do you two wanna go hunting with me and Cloudstorm?" she asked. Shadowfoot knew that if Flameheart was going, Ashflower would ask to go, so she spared the extra time. "He wants to find Turtlepelt a nice warm piece of fresh-kill before she starts kitting." Flameheart nodded and Ashflower jumped up from where she was sitting. With her two Clanmates following her, she ran back over to Cloudstorm and the four went out into the forest.

* * * * *

Shadowfoot and Cloudstorm were close to each other, both tracking the same surprisingly plump mouse by the Thunderpath. They were planning to have Cloudstorm chase it, and he would lead it to Shadowfoot's paws. Flameheart and Ashflower were close by, but Shadowfoot could barely scent them. Cloudstorm moved slightly, but flinched as a monster flew by on the Thunderpath. The mouse heard it too, and started moving a little closer to the tom.

Cloudstorm suddenly burst out from the bush he was hiding behind and began to chase the mouse, which was strange because the mouse was surprisingly fast. The mouse went past Shadowfoot and so did Cloudstorm, running right onto the Thunderpath, where he caught the mouse and killed it. Shadowfoot ran up to the side of the Thunderpath, about to congratulate him, but she heard a rumbling sound.

She looked down the Thunderpath and saw a monster coming. Shadowfoot quickly turned to look at Cloudstorm and managed to call out a warning.

"*Cloudstorm!*" she yowled. The white warrior turned to see the monster just as it was on top of him.

Chapter Fifteen

As the monster hit Cloudstorm, his body went flying a few fox-lengths ahead and landed further ahead on the Thunderpath. The monster went past him and kept going until it wasn't visible. The mouse in Cloudstorm's jaws flew out and landed close to Shadowfoot's paws.

Still shocked, Shadowfoot paused for a couple heartbeats, then she ran over to Cloudstorm. The tom's eyes were wide open, but they had a dull look and he wasn't breathing. Shadowfoot quickly dragged him off the Thunderpath and onto the side, in the dead grass, then started nudging him.

"Cloudstorm," she meowed, still shocked. A tear fell from her eye. "Cloudstorm!" She was rocking the tom back and forth, more tears falling from her eyes. "Wake up, Cloudstorm, please... Turtlepelt needs you..."

Shadowfoot had never really liked Cloudstorm, but it was terrible to lose a Clanmate. She couldn't imagine how Turtlepelt would feel...

Turtlepelt. She knew that her sister would be devastated and she might not be able to pull through the kitting if she knew her mate was gone. She still was nudging his limp body, but she knew it wouldn't matter at this point. Behind her, Shadowfoot heard Flameheart burst through the bushes by the side of the Thunderpath and Ashflower came out right behind him. Ashflower started stammering.

"W-what happened?" the grey she-cat asked, shock and sorrow covering her voice. Shadowfoot looked up and saw Ashflower run up next to her, tears streaming from her eyes. *Cloudstorm was her brother*, Shadowfoot remembered with a pang of sorrow.

"He chased a mouse onto the Thunderpath... and a monster hit him..." she told the other two cats, wiping away her tears with a

paw. Flameheart walked up in between the two she-cats.

"I'm so sorry," he murmured to Ashflower, putting his tail on her flank. She looked up at the ginger tom and nodded, then buried her muzzle in her brother's fur. Shadowfoot and Flameheart did the same, and they sat there for a while, mourning their lost Clanmate.

[Author's Note: short chapter, sorry bout that. This chapter is pretty much the same thing from Bluestar's Prophecy lol]

Chapter Sixteen

After some time, Flameheart had risen and begun to drag Cloudstorm's body back to camp. Shadowfoot had told him that Turtlepelt probably shouldn't see his dead body, because she didn't know if she had kitted yet and she might not be strong enough to continue if she saw her mate's dead body. Flameheart nodded and told Shadowfoot to run ahead, to see if her sister had kitted yet. Shadowfoot entered the camp before the other two warriors did.

Looking around, she saw Hawkflame lying down outside the nursery, his head in his paws. Smokespot was inside, carrying something. A yowl rang from the nursery and Shadowfoot knew it was Turtlepelt. She ran over and went inside.

Turtlepelt looked extremely tired, and she had a small light grey kit laying at her belly. Smokespot sighed and put down another kit, a tiny black one with silver stripes. Turtlepelt's eyes lit up as Shadowfoot walked in.

"I finished kitting," her sister said weakly. Shadowfoot looked at the little light grey patch sitting by Turtlepelt's belly and then back up at her sister. "The little light grey one survived, but her sister didn't," she continued. Her ears perked up. "Where's Cloudstorm?"

Shadowfoot looked at her paws. How am I going to tell her, she thought sadly. She tried to change the subject. "What did you name them?" she asked. Her sister's ears flattened a little.

"I named the light one Willowkit, and the other one Blackkit," she replied, now looking more concerned. "Where is Cloudstorm?" she pressed.

Shadowfoot took a deep breath. "Turtlepelt, I'm so sorry," she whispered. "Cloudstorm is dead."

Her sister's expression turned to horrified. "N-no... th-that can't be

true... this is a joke, r-right? A r-really cruel joke..." she stammered, her eyes wide. Shadowfoot shook her head slowly.

"I'm so sorry," she replied. Turtlepelt looked down at her paws, then tears flowed rapidly from her eyes and she let out a loud yowl. Shadowfoot sat down next to her sister and quietly nuzzled against her.

[more short chapters. great job nat.]

Chapter Seventeen

Shadowfoot watched her sister as she depressedly lay in her nest in the nursery. Willowkit had died overnight and Turtlepelt was grief-stricken. Shadowfoot couldn't blame her, because she had lost her mate and both her kits in one day.

But she had noticed something. Blackkit looked almost exactly like Ocean, and she couldn't shake it out of her fur. Eventually, she decided to go see if she could find Ocean where they last met.

She ran through the woods, and eventually found herself next to Twolegplace. She looked around and smelled the air, but there was no trace of the black she-cat. As she looked around, she scented another cat and heard a loud thoomp.

She turned around and saw an extremely plump-looking she-cat sitting awkwardly on a low wooden wall nearby. The she-cat was looking at her weirdly.

She must be a kittypet, Shadowfoot thought, seeing a red collar wrapped around the she-cat's neck.

"Who are you?" the she-cat rasped, her voice sounding ancient. "And why are you near my Twoleg's nest?" She was frowning strangely and it looked like that was her resting face. Shadowfoot walked a little closer.

So she is a kittypet, she thought. *And she looks and sounds like she's extremely old.* "I'm looking for a cat," she replied. "A black she-cat with silver stripes. Her name is Ocean. Can you help me find her?" she asked the old kittypet.

The she-cat huffed. "Ocean, eh? Yeah, I can help you. I know her." Shadowfoot's heart jumped. *She knows Ocean!*

"I don't have any clue why you would wanna find her, though," the

old cat continued. "All she does is stir up trouble." She sneezed. "Darn winter weather. I'm going to catch a cold."

Shadowfoot tilted her head. *Winter? That's a word I've never heard before*. She shook her head and jumped up on the wooden wall next to the kittypet.

"Sorry I didn't introduce myself sooner," she said. "My name is Shadowfoot."

"So you're a Clan cat, eh?" the she-cat said, opening one eye. "I thought so from your scruffy build. Well, my name is Morgan."

Shadowfoot nodded respectfully. "Thank you, Morgan, but can you please help me find Ocean?" she asked, a little impatient at this point. "I have something extremely important to ask her."

Morgan huffed, but nodded. "Follow me," she said, walking along the wooden wall. Shadowfoot got up and followed. After a little while of walking, they reached a small piece of grass filled with Twoleg stuff. Morgan paused on the wooden wall.

"Ocean!" the old cat yowled. A black muzzle popped out above the pile and, seeing Shadowfoot and Morgan, Ocean jumped out of the pile and joined them on the wall.

"What is it?" she asked Morgan. She looked at Shadowfoot. "Did Shadowfoot ask you to bring her here?" she said, flicking her tail.

"Uh, yes..." Shadowfoot replied. "I need to ask you a really important question. I'd much prefer to be in the forest, though." Ocean nodded and looked back at Morgan.

"Thanks for bringing her to me, Morgan," she said, dipping her head respectfully. Shadowfoot tilted her head, still a little curious about something.

"I'm sorry if I'm being rude, Morgan, but... how many moons old are you?" she asked timidly. The she-cat paused, then purred.

"Ah, I'm so old that I've lost count!" she meowed. "Last I remember, my Twolegs told me it was my '16th year', and I know that a year is

a different meaning for four seasons..." She began muttering under her breath. "well, I'm not good at math... hold on... so if I'm not wrong, I would be 64 seasons, or about a grand 192 moons old." She smiled at the other two she-cats, who had their eyes wide. *Wow*, Shadowfoot thought, astonished. *I didn't know a cat could live that long.*

"Thank you, Morgan," Ocean meowed. "Follow me, Shadowfoot." The black-and-silver she-cat jumped from wall to wall, leading her back to the forest.

Almost as soon as they jumped off of the wooden wall and into the thin layer of snow, Shadowfoot turned to Ocean.

"Okay, so this seems like a bit of a stretch to me, but let me explain something before I ask you the question," she told the black she-cat. "My sister Turtlepelt gave birth to two kits yesterday, and even though both of them sadly did not survive, I still noticed something." Shadowfoot saw Ocean's ears perk up in interest as soon as she mentioned her sister, but they quickly flattened as she told her about the kits. "One of them, which was named Blackkit, looked... almost exactly like you." Shadowfoot looked at her paws, then back up at Ocean. "I think I know who you are." she continued.

"You're my mother."

Ocean sat there for a bit, a little shocked, but she slowly nodded and smiled.

[okay that chapter was also a bit confusing but Ocean and Morgan are important characters and this gives a bit of backstory]